



VOICE OF THE VALLEY

THE RIVER VALLEY LOCAL SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER - 2025 SPRING ISSUE

River Valley Community,

If you're like me, you were probably hopeful that Buckeye Chuck's prediction of an early Spring would come true. Unfortunately, it seems like winter is not quite finished with us yet. To help you forget about these cold temperatures, we have some "hot off the presses" news in this most recent edition of the Voice of the Valley.

Despite the cold weather, we have officially broken ground on our Career Tech Expansion (CTE) Project at River Valley High School. The \$2.5 million grant from the state of Ohio will fund the renovation of 3,000 sq. ft. of our existing CTE area and add over 5,000 sq. ft. of new space as well. When completed, the lab spaces for our Agriscience and Construction Trades programs will have doubled in size from their existing space. Also, a new Healthcare Pathway lab and Construction Trades classroom space will be added.

In fact, River Valley has several opportunities for career exploration at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. At Liberty and Heritage Elementary Schools, the 5th Grade students participated in a Career Day on February 19th. Thank you to Mrs. Herdman and Mrs. Williams for their help organizing this event. Our Middle School and High School also held a Career Exploration Day. At RVMS, 8th Grade students had a chance to rotate and hear from people in many different career fields. The High School's version was held as a Career Cafe where 9th Grade students rotated tables and listened to speakers while our Food Service provided lunch in several stations. Thank you to Ms. Klingel, Mrs. Kanagy, Mrs. LaBarge, and Mrs. Garrett for planning the MS and HS events.

We continue to look for more ways to expose our students to Career Exploration including hands-on activities through our Innovation Labs at the Elementary Schools or Career Discovery Classes at the Middle School. At the High School, there are opportunities for students to earn Industry-recognized credentials and College Credit Plus courses where students can earn college credit.

In this edition of the Voice of the Valley, you'll find information on the following:

- Updates from Heritage Elementary, Liberty Elementary, RV Middle School, and RV High School.
- Update on the Bond Projects (Roofs, HVAC, and long-term parking lot plans)
- County Spelling Bee Champion - 7th Grade RV Middle School student, Garrett Obenour
- RV Food Service - Honey Bee Grant, plus many other important updates from around our district.

Go Vikings!

- Adam Wickham - Superintendent



RV FFA Agricultural Communications Team placed 2nd in the State. Member Reagan Fitsko placed in the top 15 of all individuals!



Safety is always a priority for our transportation team. Here are a few reminders you can share with your students to help everyone be safe:

- Please don't run to the bus; there can be icy or wet areas that are slippery.
- Maintain a safe distance from the road while waiting on the bus.
- Use the handrails when getting on and off the bus as the steps can get slippery from rain, snow, or dirt.

Coats, hats & gloves are being left on the bus daily; please double-check that your students are bringing their belongings home.

We also want to welcome our newest bus driver, Cindy Glock!

PowerSchool Security Incident

On December 28, 2024, PowerSchool became aware of a cybersecurity incident involving unauthorized exfiltration of certain personal information from PowerSchool Student Information System (SIS) environments through one of their community-focused customer support portals, PowerSource. This breach happened via a PowerSchool support account. This did not happen as a result of something River Valley Local Schools did or did not do to protect our data.

PowerSchool has since engaged Experian, a trusted credit reporting agency, to provide complimentary identity protection and credit monitoring services to individuals who had information exfiltrated from PowerSchool SIS.

We are encouraging all staff, parents, and students who have been affiliated with River Valley Local Schools anytime between January 1, 2004 and January 1, 2025 to activate this offering.

To learn more about this service visit: rvk12.org/breach

The deadline to complete this enrollment is May 30, 2025.



Things are Buzzing at the F.A.R.M.

The RV F.A.R.M. was awarded the Bee Cause Project grant through the Whole Kids Foundation for \$1,500.00. This grant will be used for purchasing two bee nucs (a small hive that contains a small community of honey bees), including all the supplies necessary to care for the bees, two full bee suits, and several bee helmets with netting. This project is slated to begin in early April in hopes of providing another opportunity to educate our students, increase awareness of pollination, and improve the environment.

Download the ParentSquare app today!

Stay involved with your student's learning and activities at school. From anywhere.



Preschool News

The Peer Application for the 2025-2026 school year is now available on our district website.

Important Dates

- Starting January 2025: Online applications for the 2025-2026 school year can be submitted.
- Friday, March 14, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 10:50 AM: Preschool Open House



Application Process

If you are interested in having your child be considered to serve as a peer model within the River Valley Preschool Program, please see the directions below:

Complete the Peer Application on our district website. www.rvk12.org/preschool/peer-model-applications

1. Upon submission, you will receive an automatic response.
2. A Preschool Team member will then contact you to sign up for a Preschool Open House time.



We look forward to meeting you at our Preschool Open House!

The River Valley Preschool Team

**LEARN.
PLAY.
GROW**



RIVER VALLEY PRESCHOOL

Liberty Elementary 1932 Whetstone River Rd. N.
Mr. Dutt, Building Principal & Mrs. Kantzer, Special Education Director
Mrs. McCurdy & Mrs. Strzelecki, Teachers

FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025: 9 AM — 11 AM

We invite future Vikings to our preschool open house for the 2025-2026 school year!

This open house allows us to observe your child's:

- communication skills
- fine & gross motor skills
- social emotional development
- pre-academic skills
- adaptive skills

Verified RV Residents are given enrollment preference.
All applicants will have residence verified

Please register at: www.rvk12.org/preschool
by completing the peer model application.
Must be registered to participate

A Staff member will contact you to schedule an appointment for open house

Must be
ages 3-5 &
potty trained!
*3 by 4/30/25

Monday -Friday
AM Class:
9-11:40
PM Class:
1-3:40

Tuition: \$140 monthly

**Busing is
not provided**

Heritage Elementary News



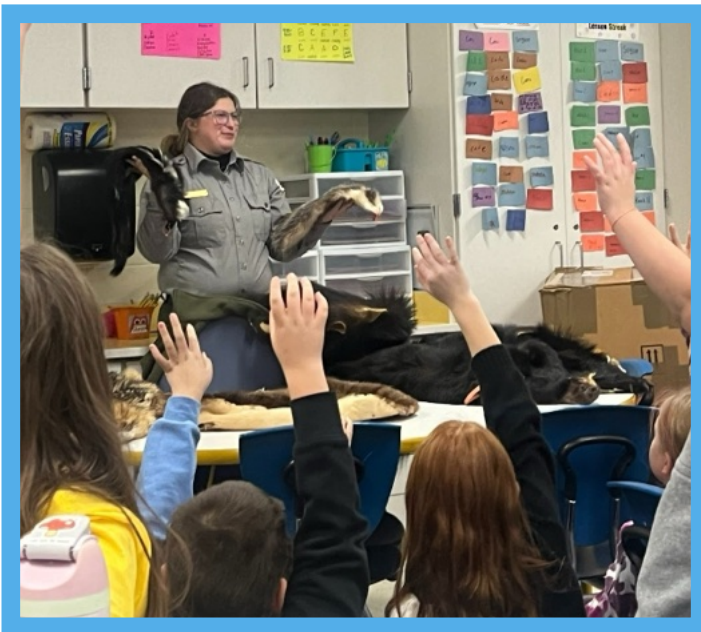
Christmas Clearinghouse

Our Heritage Viking Volunteers presented Junior Service Guild member Elizabeth Millisor with a check for \$1,529.73 to help with Christmas Clearinghouse.



Grade 5 - Christmas Cactus Exploration

Andrew Deem and Pam Holman, from the RV Farm, came to teach our 5th-grade students about the plants at the RV Farm. They also taught the students about Christmas Cactus plants and how they grow. Each student got to take home a Christmas Cactus.



Grade 4- Army Corps of Engineers

The Army Corps of Engineers of Alum Creek visited 4th graders to discuss the different animals of Ohio. Students discussed animal adaptations, food chains, and learned many new facts about the animals around them!

Grade 4 - Holiday Fun

Fourth graders at Heritage have been celebrating December with Holiday Fun Days through donations from 4th-grade families. Students have participated in many fun activities, including decorating stockings! Other activities include Reindeer STEM, Grinch Day Punch, and cooking decorating among other special activities and treats!



Liberty Elementary News

The snow was falling, and the temperatures dropped, but our students thrived as they participated in the classroom and in various activities at Liberty Elementary. During the late fall and winter months, we held several activities for our students and community.

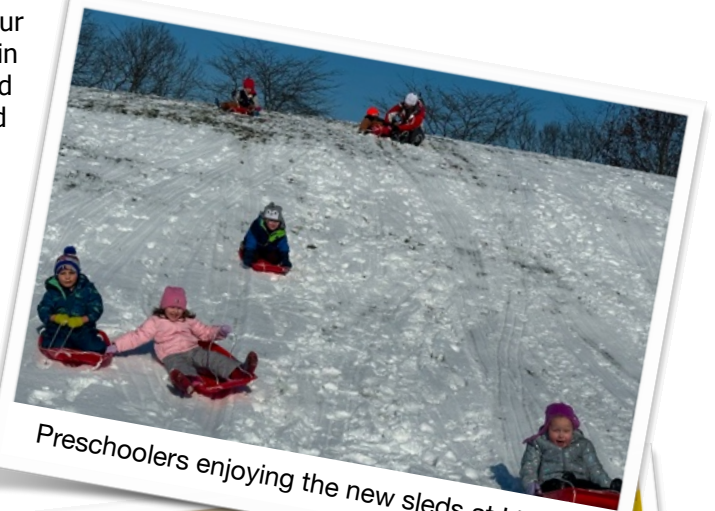
A few of those activities include:

- Veterans Day Recognition
- PBIS Student of the Month Assemblies
- Christmas Clearinghouse Donation Drive
- High School Band Concert at Liberty
- PBIS (Cookie Decorating) Quarterly Reward
- PTO Breakfast with Santa
- PTO Santa Dance
- School-wide Christmas Singalong
- PTO Valentines Dance (February 14th)

As we continue our goal of challenging our students in the classroom and engaging our parents/community, the following events will be occurring at Liberty. I look forward to seeing the progress our students make in the classroom and the enjoyment they may have by attending these activities.

Upcoming Liberty Events:

- i-Ready School-wide Challenge
- PBIS Student of the Month Assemblies
- The Ned Show Assembly
- PTO Movie Night
- Specials Night at Liberty
- PTO Fun Night
- Book Fair
- Preschool Open House (For 25-26 School Year)
- Literacy Night



Preschoolers enjoying the new sleds at Liberty.



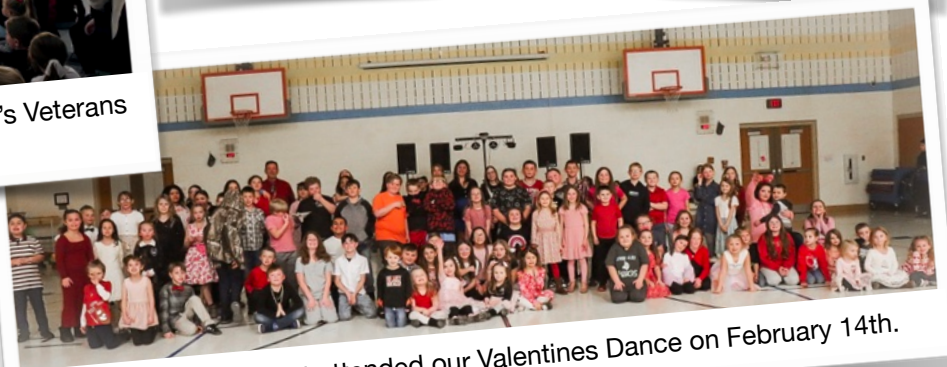
Liberty's School-Wide Christmas Singalong.



Orchestra performing at our Holiday Concert in December.



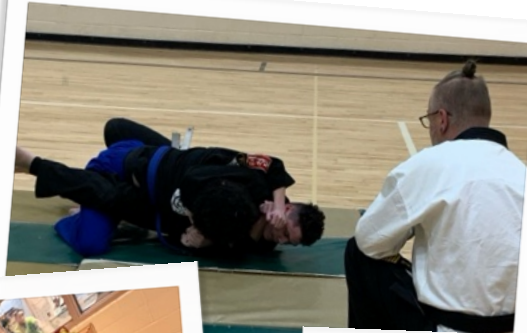
Over 80 veterans recognized at Liberty's Veterans Day Celebration.



Liberty students that attended our Valentines Dance on February 14th.

RV Celebrates Health with Annual Wellness Night

River Valley held its annual Wellness Night on February 13th. The 2-hour event featured over 30 vendors for our Viking community to visit, as well as classes and demonstrations from local businesses that allowed everyone to try something new. Whether it was cardio drumming, martial arts, line dancing, or pickleball, our community seemed to enjoy themselves. There were even tasty treats to sample prepared by our very own Lunch Bunch. The exciting evening concluded with a raffle, where over 25 items went home with winners from this free and informational event. Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success. We look forward to seeing you next year!



RVMS Student Wins County Spelling Bee

Garrett Obenour outlasted 19 other students in the Marion County Spelling Bee Tuesday at Tri-Rivers. Obenour, who won with his final word "cavalier", completed 24 rounds without an error. Last year, Obenour finished in second place after competing for 87 rounds. Obenour claimed a trophy for his victory while the Traveling Trophy came to River Valley this year. Other RVMS competitors were Zoey Wickham, Ella Moore, Mason Ring, and Carter Kloha. Congratulations to all the participants.



Middle School News

It is hard to believe the first half of the school year is complete and we are into the second semester. River Valley Middle School had an exciting first half of the year and we look forward to more as we focus on the second half of this school year.

The winter season has been a wonderful one for RVMS. Sports teams have had great successes while the musical arts have given great performances. Both boys' and girls' basketball teams have racked up many victories while the wrestling team has won four events in a row as they continue to show progress.

Garrett Obenour won the recent RVMS Spelling Bee, followed by Ella Moore (2nd), Mason Ring (3rd), Carter Kloha (4th), and Zoey Wickham (5th). These five students will compete in the Marion County Spelling Bee at Tri-Rivers in February. Mary Martindell and Owen Thorpe are the alternates.

High School and Middle School counselors are beginning to work with 8th grade students on transitioning to high school and on scheduling. We have established opportunities for students to explore possibilities for next year and beyond as they continue their education at RVHS.



RVMS 8th graders pose with Brutus at OSUM.



Mr. Schuster, Assistant Principal, gets silly stringed as part of a student reward.



RVMS 8th graders learn about careers at Tri-Rivers.



River Valley students conduct a grade-level dance to end the first semester.

School District Income Tax

What does this mean for me, and why is it important for River Valley Local Schools?

Every spring, community members reach out with questions about our District's earned income tax, including how it works, how to make payments, and whether they need to file a special tax return. As an overview, River Valley has a 1% earned income tax levy. Unlike a traditional school district income tax, which is based on the same income base as the state's income tax, the earned income tax is only based on earned income for that tax year. An earned income tax excludes other forms of income and deductions, such as dividends, capital gains, pensions, etc.

Historical trends indicate that the majority of our community members' employers withhold the tax from each paycheck, while self-employed individuals may make quarterly payments. Regardless of how estimated amounts are paid to the Ohio Department of Taxation, an annual SD100 tax return should be filed at the same time that federal, state, and local tax returns are due in April. While River Valley does ultimately receive these funds, all school district income tax (SDIT) payments are made to the Ohio Department of Taxation, which tracks, collects, and processes all of these payments. Four times a year (January, April, July, and October), the State distributes the funds to school districts.

The School District Income Tax was initially passed for River Valley in 2019 with a January 1, 2020, effective date for our taxpayers. Our community recently renewed this in the November 2023 election for another five-year term. This revenue source has been a great support for our general operating budget. For fiscal year 2024 (the 2023-2024 school year and our most recently completed fiscal year), the School District Income Tax accounted for approximately 12% of our general fund resources, which has proven to be a helpful source of income as our community grows and diversifying our revenue stream. The income tax can, however, be a more volatile resource than property tax since it is based solely on earned income. The volatility of this revenue source proves the importance of long-term planning, which includes monitoring national, state, and local impacts on our economy.



Brittany Keller

RV Schools Treasurer

View more resources
from the
Business Office at:
rvk12.org/fiscal

If you have any questions about this or other items related to school funding, please call us at: 740-725-5400

FFA News

On Monday, December 13th, FFA members Becca Baldinger, Marissa Loyer, Scarlett Roston, and Abby Wickham traveled to North Union High School to participate in the District 6 Food Science competition. This was the 3rd time these students had participated in competition this season, following the State online test competition and the Sub-District in-person competition in early December.

In this contest, students are put in the shoes of food scientists and complete the tasks and responsibilities that would come with a position in the industry. Monday evening they identified aromas, completed triangle taste tests, differentiated between food analysis tools, performed complex food math calculations, categorized customer inquiries, highlighted Good Manufacturing Practices, and finally completed a Product Development activity that required them to work as a team in developing new food products.

This team competed at the State level competition on Saturday, January 25th, at the Ohio State University, where they earned fourth place and received a banner that will be displayed in the high school FFA hallway!



High School News

It has been a busy winter at River Valley High School. Our students have been busy working through the end of the first semester, and the second half of the school year is well underway.

Some highlights from the past few months include a number of positive and unique opportunities for our students to take advantage of. Going back to November, we were able to celebrate and recognize our Veterans with our annual Veterans Day Ceremony. As we progressed into the holiday season, our students gathered donations for local charities and participated in our holiday music concert season.

Our students have been able to make numerous college and career readiness-minded visits, including visiting local workplaces and manufacturing locations, as well as Ohio State Main Campus. We have additional visits scheduled for the remainder of the school year. Students also participated in the ASVAB test, which is a military college and career readiness test that provides students with information regarding careers in the armed forces that match their interests and abilities.

Our counseling and career readiness team hosted a freshman career cafe. We invited 16 local employers to come in and eat lunch with all of our freshmen students. During the lunch, students rotated through four employers that again were matched to their interests and skills. The intent of this was to expose our students to local employment opportunities and hear first-hand accounts from these employers as to what it takes between now and graduation to have opportunities in Marion right out of high school or down the road after college.

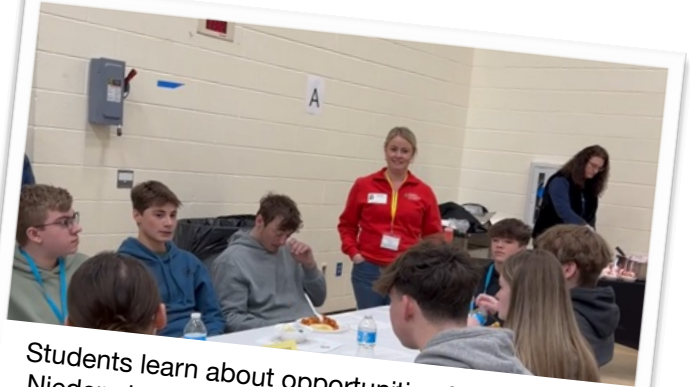
Winter sports are a huge part of what our students have been doing as of late. The winter season was very successful, with both Girls Bowling and Boys Basketball winning the Mid-Ohio Athletic Conference Championship. Additionally, Drew Goldberg was a conference champion in wrestling.

Looking ahead, juniors will soon be taking the ACT, and before we know it, spring testing will be upon us. This year continues to fly by, and we are proud of all of our students' accomplishments to this point in the year. This update is not an all-inclusive list, and we encourage you to keep up to date with our weekly update on the RVHS website for a more in-depth look at what's happening at River Valley.

As always, feel free to contact us at the High School by calling 740-725-5800 if you ever need anything or have any questions.

HS Administration Contact Information

- Travis Stout - Principal - tstout@rvk12.org - 740-725-5805
- Kyle Strzelecki - Assistant Principal - kstrzelecki@rvk12.org - 740-725-5800 ext. 1809
- Sage Brannon - Athletic & Activities Director- sbrannon@rvk12.org - 740-725-5806



Students learn about opportunities from Kimberly Niedermier, HR Generalist at Graphic Packaging.



Students learn about programs available from Goodwill in Marion at the Career Cafe.



Healthcare student earning CPR certification with help from First Consolidated Fire District staff.

Construction Begins on Career Technical Education Addition

River Valley Local Schools has a long history of commitment to offering programs that not only prepare our students academically but also provide opportunities for students to engage in experiences that align with their broader interests, leading them to choose a career pathway. This includes our commitment to the arts, with dedicated visual arts and music instruction in all buildings, the only orchestra program in Marion County, and a dedicated innovation lab in each elementary building, offering hands-on opportunities for students related to career clusters. We are also very fortunate to have a thriving agricultural education program with two dedicated high school instructors. RV is one of a handful of districts in Ohio that has expanded Ag and FFA beyond a single instructor.

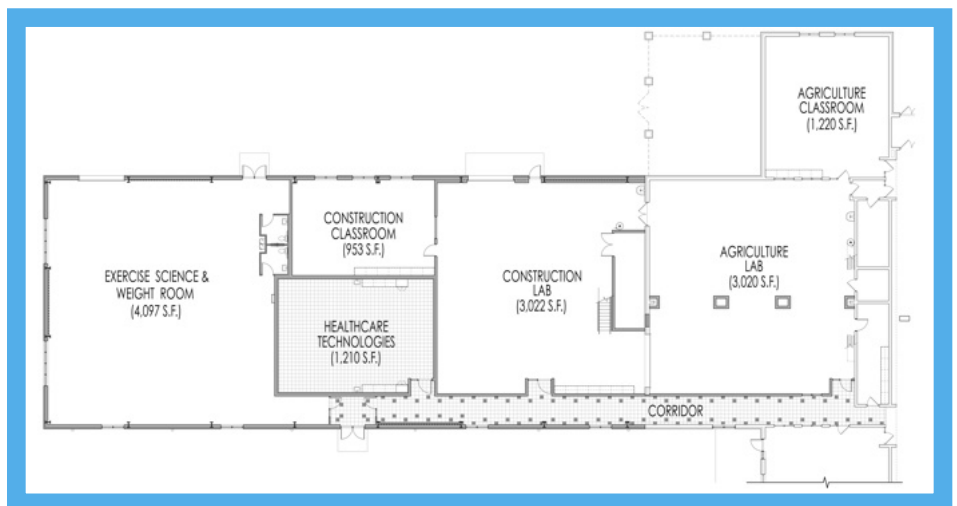
We have set our purpose to “Creating Tomorrow’s Leaders,” and we believe that in addition to strong academics and accountability, this involves a commitment to providing rich experiences and instruction that ignite a passion for a lifetime of learning related to a career. To broaden this commitment and offer more space for career education programming, RV Schools applied for a grant in December of 2023 to expand our lab space at the high school.

On March 4, 2024, Gov. DeWine and then Lt. Gov. Husted announced the recipients of this CTE Grant. River Valley High School was one of fifty-six schools in the state to be awarded funding, receiving a \$2.5 million grant, the maximum amount given to a school district, and one of seven schools to receive the full \$2.5 million award. The goal of this grant is to expand our lab spaces for Ag Science (FFA) and Construction Trades and to add a Healthcare Pathway. In January 2025, the construction crew broke ground on this addition.



Artist's Rendering of the CTE Expansion at River Valley High School

Since the construction method selected for this project is a pre-engineered steel building, the School Board was able to add space to the floor plan, which will provide a new 4,000 Sq. Ft. weight room for our athletic department. This room has been needed in our district since the new high school was constructed over twenty years ago. This additional space will also expand opportunities for physical education classes and offer the option of expanding our Health Care pathway to include Exercise Science.



Floor Plan of the CTE Expansion at River Valley High School

The School Board was able to allocate funding to construct the weight room space; however, the Board has asked the River Valley Athletic Boosters to raise the funds needed to finish the interior and outfit the new weight room with the needed equipment. We are incredibly excited for the many opportunities. This new space will provide for our students and our community. If you would like to help the Boosters complete this project, please visit rvboosters.org for more information.

The project is projected to be completed around September 1st, and we are excited about the many opportunities this new space will provide for the students at River Valley Local Schools.

Bond Project Updates

Roofs: The roof projects are nearing completion with all of the metal roof panels and membrane areas completed. The final pieces to be completed include the detail work (gutters, coping caps, etc.) at the Middle School and High School. At the Elementary Schools, the masonry through wall flashing repairs have begun at Liberty and will proceed to Heritage in the coming weeks. This final portion of the roofing project will be finished this Spring.

HVAC: All Temp Refrigeration is still on track to complete the following upgrades this Spring or early Summer:

- Middle School Chiller (AC unit for the building)
- Two Roof Top Units (RTU) at both Heritage and Liberty Elementary School (these units provide the heating and cooling for nearly all of the classroom spaces).

Parking Lots: In order to continue being good stewards of the resources our community has entrusted to us. Last summer, bond funds were used to do paving, patching, crack sealing and seal coating of all parking lot surfaces. To avoid our parking lots deteriorating into such negative conditions in the future, the district has been working on a 15-year capital plan for parking lots. Each summer, the plan is to use part of the Permanent Improvement Fund and address parking lot areas on each of our campuses.

River Valley Weight Room Addition

Since our schools were constructed, our athletic programs have struggled to have adequate space for weight training. Each year, the weight equipment is moved between two locations as space is needed for various sports seasons. Recently, River Valley Local Schools has decided to add on to the CTE expansion project to provide space that will be dedicated as a permanent weight room where all RV teams can come to train and recover throughout the year. Now, we need your help to raise the funds needed to finish and outfit this space. Scan the QR code below to help us make this dream a reality!



Let's Go Vikings



River Valley Local Schools Board of Education Members

**PRESIDENT- DON RENGERT
VICE PRESIDENT- CHERYL BEINEKE
ROBERT STUMP
BEN ALBRIGHT
NATHAN SMITH**

“The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.”

– Robert M. Hutchins